



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Samra G. Brouk

## Rochester Delegation Announces Community Investments to Address Community Violence

SAMRA G. BROUK December 17, 2021

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**Rochester, NY** - Our families have been challenged by so much this past year: the COVID-19 pandemic, job insecurity, figuring out remote learning, worries about paying the rent or mortgage, providing food for their children, and more. We now have the added dimension of the dramatic and historical increase in violence, including crimes involving guns.

The Rochester Delegation is working with City Hall as well as our partners in government, including municipal, county, state and federal governments, to ensure resources are brought home to help our community. This work includes funding highly-proven Community Violence Intervention initiatives to interrupt behaviors leading to violence before it happens, improving relations between the police and the communities they serve and pushing for greater investments in mental health so that people who need help can readily access it.

The Rochester Delegation has been fighting in Albany to bring state resources to fund local organizations on the ground here in Rochester who are doing important work in our communities. This includes investments in the Center for Teen Empowerment, the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, Rochester Works, PathStone Foundation, ABC Save Our Youth, Rise Up Rochester, the Urban League of Rochester, Roc the Peace, and more.

The Delegation was also able to secure historic investments in SNUG programs within the Greater Rochester Area. Modeled on Cure Violence programs in Chicago, SNUG programming treats gun violence as a disease and focuses on mediation with high-risk youth and interrupting the “transmission” of violence, preventing gun violence and retaliation before it happens.

Fixing the problems of poverty, disenfranchisement, and disillusionment in our city, addressing the legacy of systemic racism and its impacts on communities of color, will require collaborative solutions between families, community leaders, nonprofits, elected officials and more. Those of us in government, at all levels, must work together with parents, neighbors, community and faith leaders to take every step possible to address this shocking and deeply tragic violence in our neighborhoods.

**Senator Samra G. Brouk:** “The uptick in violence facing our community is a symptom of chronic underinvestment in our communities. By funding programs that address the root

causes of community violence and giving children and families the support they deserve, we can ensure fewer futures are lost to violence, fewer parents are left mourning a child, and that all people have a safe community to call home. I am proud of the work we've done to keep illegal guns off of our streets, reunite families, and to invest millions into local programming. I will always work to ensure our local government and community organizations receive the resources they need to fulfill our home's promise as a safe, equitable community for all."

**Senator Jeremy A. Cooney:** "I am committed to continuing to work with our partners in state and local government to identify policies that will reduce gun violence and fund community-based organizations willing to confront the violence we are seeing in our city streets and across New York State. Let me be clear: there is more work to do and I am focused, along with the entire Rochester State Delegation, on legislation that will improve public safety and restore neighborhood peace for our families and business owners."

**Assemblymember Harry B. Bronson:** "We have long understood that where a person is born and lives correlates with their overall life chances. We know that here in Rochester many of our families live in environments characterized by high levels of economic, racial and social inequality and as a result are more exposed to violence and victimization than those living elsewhere. That is why I am pleased to join my colleagues, neighborhood leaders, non-violence prevention organizations, and concerned families who are investing time and resources into ending higher levels of income inequality, lack of opportunities, and the sense of helplessness and hopelessness that are leading to higher levels of mistrust, social disorganization, and violent crime. We must adequately address these issues by dramatically increasing the equality of opportunity and changing the outcomes that perpetuate violence."

**Assemblymember Sarah Clark:** "As your state representatives it is important that we secure needed resources to address the nationwide surge in violence disproportionately affecting

our Rochester community. Through our combined efforts, funding for several organizations here on the ground will help combat some of the root causes that lead to violence in our neighborhoods. These resources will provide violence interruption and intervention services, conflict resolution training, restorative justice measures, access to employment for youth and more. The investment in our local organizations doing this work every day, is a critical first step on the road towards peace, but we know more is needed. We will continue to work together with all our partners because ending violence in Rochester, and healing our community, will take collaboration at all levels.”

**Assemblymember Jennifer Lunsford:** "Violent crime rates have increased all across the country over the course of this pandemic. Gun violence is a scourge on our community and has taken too many young lives. I am proud to stand with my Democratic colleagues to provide these critical funds to address violence in our streets. These funds support organizations that take a collaborative approach that bring together stake-holders to address the root causes of gun violence—things like poverty, lack of economic opportunity and disillusionment with the system."

**Assemblymember Demond Meeks:** “My heart breaks for my Rochester community. The children that will never return home to their mothers and fathers, the families that will never be together again. This violence has torn a hole in our community. The city of Rochester has officially claimed its 80th homicide in this year alone, marking a more than 60% increase in homicides compared to last year. Addressing this crisis takes effective leadership and carefully considered legislation that works with our community. To draw on the words of Illinois' comprehensive Reimagine Public Safety Act, our city requires "a new and different approach, one that is not necessarily soft or hard on crime, but rather smart on crime". It is essential that we address this crisis by delivering critical investments to our communities and programs that are directly engaged with challenges ahead.”